

Wildlife Program

Week of February 25 – March 3, 2013

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

Fisher Conservation - Biologist Jeff Lewis and Endangered Species Section Manager Harriet Allen led a meeting among representatives of the National Forests and National Parks in the Washington Cascades to discuss the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses that would be required for the proposed Cascades fisher reintroduction. The National Park Service (NPS) will likely conduct a NEPA analysis, pending further internal discussion, whereas the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will likely be a cooperating partner in an analysis and will not be required to conduct an independent analysis. Lewis and Allen also attended a meeting at Olympic National Park to discuss and plan implementation of a monitoring project to determine fisher occupancy on the Olympic Peninsula. The project will involve use of hair-snares and camera stations located throughout the Olympic Peninsula to detect fishers over a three-year period. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) as well as several tribes, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Olympic National Forest is likely to participate in this project by establishing and examining survey stations outside Olympic National Park.

REGION 1

Wolf Management

District 1

Wolf Captures: Conflict Specialist Shepherd assisted Wolf Biologist Becker with the aerial wolf collaring effort in the fixed wing spotter plane. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed Smackout wolf sightings with Rancher Jeff Dawson. Conflict Specialist Shepherd discussed wolf sightings with U.S. Air Force Survival School employee Todd Foster who along with private citizens has recently observed wolves in the Chain Lakes and Ruby Mountain areas. Conflict Specialist produced and delivered electronic maps of a recently dispersed Smackout Pack wolf to Biologists Jeff Heinlen and Scott Fitkin from Region 2.



Eight wolves crossing a lake in the Diamond wolf pack territory.



Helicopter utilized for a darting effort in the patchy cover of the Diamond wolf pack territory.

Northeast Washington Wolf Meetings: Biologist McCanna and Specialist Shepherd assisted Game Division Manager Dave Ware, Carnivore Manager Donny Martorello, and Conflict Manager Stephanie Simek with the Cusick and Colville wolf-livestock conflict management meetings. The Cusick meeting was well attended with 67 people and the Colville meeting had approximately 250 people in attendance. Both meetings went well providing the public opportunities to ask questions after the presentations and visit with staff after the meetings to address localized concerns. Jay Shepherd is already receiving follow-up contacts from these meetings.



Conflict Manager Stephanie Simek, Carnivore Manager Donny Martorello, Game Division Manager Dave Ware, and Regional Director Steve Pozzanghera at the Colville wolf-livestock conflict management public meeting addressed approximately 250 people.

Landowner Database: Supervisor McCanna met with Jay Shepherd on Thursday to develop a plan to address landowners in each wolf territory within District 1. Specialist Shepherd will start a landowner database for each territory with Smackout being the priority. Shepherd will also be developing databases for elk and deer damage for each county.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Elk and bighorn surveys: District Biologist Wik and Assistant District Biologist Vekasy conducted aerial surveys of the Asotin and Black Butte bighorn sheep herds. Elk in Game Management Units (GMUs) 181 and 186 were also classified during the survey. Elk surveys are scheduled to begin Monday morning in the Western Blues continuing through this week and possibly next depending upon weather. Numerous golden eagle nests were checked during the bighorn surveys.



An Asotin ram observed during the aerial survey. Very few lambs were observed in this herd following the all age pneumonia outbreak 12 months ago (above). A golden eagle incubating an egg, observed from the helicopter during bighorn surveys (below).



GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

Pacific Flyway Waterfowl Wingbee: District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base participated in the annual Pacific Flyway Waterfowl “Wingbee” which was held this year once again at the Coleman National Fish Hatchery south of Redding, California. This effort involved compiling and analyzing over 22,000 duck and goose wings/tails collected in the hunter harvest in the fall and early winter throughout the Pacific states.

The Wingbee is sponsored every year by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for each of the four waterfowl flyways in the United States. The Pacific Flyway includes partnerships with a consortium of western fish and wildlife agencies. Some 40 personnel assisted in the Wingbee this week, traveling from New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. Agencies represented included USFWS, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Nevada Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (formerly Department of Fish and Game), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The two representatives accepting the invitation to participate this year from WDFW were Stefanie Bergh from Region 5 and Dana Base from Region 1.



Four tables of waterfowl wing checkers at the Wingbee at the Coleman National Fish Hatchery near Redding, California during the last week of February 2013.

Private Lands/Access

Wildlife Control: Biologist Rasley coordinated six depredation permit (DP) deer hunts with Pepper Bridge vineyard owners regarding deer damage. A total of four antlerless deer were taken. This vineyard is located along the Oregon/Washington State line. With all of the workers and houses in the vineyard each and every hunt must be closely monitored. After a tour and a meeting with the owners they said “they were very pleased with our efforts towards trying to control all of the deer damage they have been experiencing.”

Biologist Rasley received a call from Asotin County Cloverland farmer Mark Greene. Mark said “he wanted to tell me how good everything is going and that all 400 plus elk have not returned to his canola crop since they filled 2 DP elk permits. The elk are now staying on our wildlife area over on Smoothing Iron Ridge.” Mark’s neighbors offered to buy the salt WDFW puts out on our property if we ever choose not to.

REGION 2

None

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Deer Study: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to two radioed deer mortalities from the recently initiated deer study. The carcasses were found less than 24 hours after receiving the “mortality” report. There is a nine hour delay between when the radio stops moving and the mortality message being sent and since the carcasses had obviously been moved post-mortem, there was some delay in the message being sent. The deer carcasses had been heavily scavenged, but there was no evidence of predation. Both animals were fairly old and femur marrow indicated that energy reserves were very low.



Radio collared deer carcass probably less than 48 hours post-mortem.



The color of the femur marrow from one of the deer mortalities indicates low energy reserves.

Golden Eagle Surveys: Biologists Bernatowicz and Moore spent most of the week surveying golden eagle territories. All high priority and known occupied sites west of Yakima and in Kittitas County have been surveyed.

Elk Hoof Rot Study: Biologist Moore worked with numerous staff from the Murray and Wenas Wildlife Areas to collect four elk calves to assist with Kristin Mansfield's (Statewide Wildlife Veterinarian) hoof rot study. Elk collected from eastern Washington are being used as controls in the research. Once the calves were collected, full necropsies and histology samples were collected by Kristin's team.

Other

Winter Conditions: Weather the past week was mild with some very windy days. It was below freezing overnight, but warming into the 40's and 50's during the day.

The forecast for the coming week is supposed to be about the same with partly cloudy skies and lows around freezing and highs in the 40's or 50's. There is a chance of rain early in the week.

Elk are beginning to range off the feed sites and come back at feeding time. There is no snow cover near the feed sites. There is starting to be a visible green up of grass and feed site numbers dropped by the end of the weekend. Elk are in fair condition.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Northern Puget Sound Lesser Snow Goose Study: District 14 and Private Lands personnel, including Biologists Danilson and Roozen and Technicians Otto, Deyo and Anderson were heavily involved in efforts to capture lesser snow geese this week. The purpose of these final captures was to outfit 10 adult female geese with platform terminal (or satellite) transmitter implants.

The challenge of capturing 10 individual geese from 10 unique flocks/capture events proved challenging. However, the team was successful by surgically implanting all 10 transmitters with the birds successfully released. This work, in cooperation with Waterfowl Section Biologist Evenson, is another component of the lesser snow goose study initiated in Region 4 this year.



Lesser snow geese forage in a potato field. Note the collared geese in foreground which are a male and female collared in 2012, and have been observed together on several occasions.



Veterinarian Dr. Scott Ford implants a radio transmitter in an adult female snow goose captured by WDFW staff.

Oregon Spotted Frog Survey Project: Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn assisted new seasonal Biologist Cindy Johnson in making landowner contacts and developing survey schedule and strategy for upcoming Oregon spotted frog (OSF) surveys in Skagit and Whatcom counties. Johnson conducted site visits to several properties with known breeding populations of OSF, but none were observed. The sites visited were all severely overgrown as compared to previous years, which may influence OSF breeding behavior/success and will likely make surveying much more challenging. Danilson also provided new employee orientation for Johnson’s counterpart Carmella Bauman, who began work on March 1. Johnson and Bauman will begin conducting formal surveys next week.

This will be the third year that District 14 personnel have conducted OSF surveys in Skagit and Whatcom counties. The objective of the project, funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), is to further delineate the geographic range of this sensitive species to assist this agency in conducting a status review of OSF in accordance with the Endangered Species Act.

North Cascades Elk Herd Clover Trapping Project and Elk Research Meeting: Biologist DeBruyn and Technician Anderson conducted trap checks every day this week. No Elk were caught. The primary objective of this work is to maintain a broad distribution of radio collared elk in the herd as part of the “mark-resight” methods used to estimate the population during late winter aerial surveys.

Biologist DeBruyn met with members of The Upper Skagit, Tulalip and Stillaguamish tribes and Professor David Wallin of Western Washington University to discuss a project using GPS radio collars on elk in the Nooksack and Skagit valleys to more clearly understand damage and road kill issues. The project is being carried out by the Tulalip and Stillaguamish tribes.

Swan Mortality and Morbidity Project: This week WDFW Technician Anderson responded to calls of sick, injured and dead swans in Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties. Only one swan was collected this week, a trumpeter swan in Skagit County believed to have been injured by a power line collision.

This is the third consecutive week during the 2012-2013 seasons in which carcass collection numbers are declining. Trumpeter swans are beginning to migrate out of Western Washington. Known roost sites and feeding areas are turning up lower numbers of swans. Swans are also observed feeding more in potato fields and cover crop vegetation than in corn fields as previously noted.

	Skagit	Snohomish	Whatcom	Sumas	TOTAL
Power line suspect	28	5	27		60
Lead suspect	26	1	13	4	44
Trauma*	6		7	6	19
Unknown	15		3		18
Feather Pile	8		4	6	18
TOTAL	83	6	54	16	159

Jim Creek Navy Base Pika Project: District Biologist Milner worked with Navy staff to determine whether the March 1 sequester will impact the project. As of Friday, the project was still expected to be funded. Milner began working on the proposal that spells out how the pika surveys will be achieved at Jim Creek.

Sea Duck Joint Venture (SDJV) Marine Waterfowl Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued transcribing data from three weeks' worth of aerial surveys in marine waters of British Columbia (BC). These surveys are a continuation of SDJV funded structured waterfowl surveys along the Pacific coast of North America. Similar surveys are taking place along the Atlantic coast. In previous years, surveys were flown along the outer coasts of Oregon and Washington. These baseline surveys are the first complete look at wintering locations and concentrations for most of these marine areas and will lead to further analysis to determine the best way to sample these species. Winter surveys are being performed to see if they present a more complete picture of population numbers for breeding surveys which are hampered by the cryptic nesting location and widespread distribution of these species. WDFW performed these surveys due to experienced crews, available resources, and lack of available staff in BC. Additional information on the surveys is available at <http://seaduckjv.org/>

Golden Eagle Nest Monitoring: Assistant District Biologist Cyra began exploratory work on priority Golden Eagle sites in District 13. Heavy rain and obscuring clouds prevented viewing of the historic site at Index Town Wall, while heavy wet unplowed snow prevented access to the West Cady Ridge site. Due to heavy snowpack in the Cascades this latter site will likely need to be included in aerial surveys occurring later in the season. Assistant District Biologist DeBruyn also encountered unfavorable survey conditions. Biologist Anderson touched base with landowners that have historical golden eagle nest sites to keep dialog going on collaboration in monitoring as well as status of access. Sites are still under snow.

WDFW-Woodland Park Zoo (WPZ) Citizen Amphibian Monitoring Project: Biologist Anderson contacted a number of area local public land managers to coordinate volunteer citizen amphibian surveys on area public lands. Anderson also worked with WPZ high school education staff regarding sites they are interested in monitoring.

Additional information on the WDFW-WPZ amphibian survey program is available at <http://www.zoo.org/page.aspx?pid=2004>

Information regarding the Seattle Parks and Recreation Volunteer Naturalist Program is available at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/environment/naturalists.htm>

Urban Bald Eagle Management Assistance: Biologist Anderson worked with USFWS to enlist citizen help regarding a potentially injured bald eagle at Pipe Lake. The nest has moved and Anderson found two citizens via phone networking to watch the nest and provide updates to WDFW/USFWS and our collaborating wildlife rehabilitation facility.

Osprey Conflict Reduction and Management Assistance: Biologist Anderson issued a permit for nest exclusion to T-Mobile and Puget Sound Energy. Anderson recommended platform installation and the property owner (PSE) required it. These entities are now working with

USFWS due to the fact that WDFW considers March 1-September 30 the osprey nesting season and jurisdictional authority defaults to USFWS. The property owner (PSE) is requiring an attempt to have a platform be put on the tower in this case since the area around the platform has too much underground infrastructure that may be damaged.

Anderson received word regarding ongoing collaborative efforts with Port of Seattle SeaTac biologists to exclude osprey due to airstrike concerns. Ospreys are the fifth most common airstrike for SeaTac and there is a large effort to develop exclusionary techniques that effectively keep the birds off of cell tower and other manmade structures. Efforts for the 2013 season are being reexamined from 2012 efforts that failed and adjustments are being made to hopefully find a successful solution. Permits have been reissued to Port of Seattle for nest exclusion earlier this year, in the wintering/inactive nest season.

Wildlife Areas

Wood Duck Monitoring Project: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with two members of the Washington Waterfowl Association at the Stillwater Unit. Approximately 20 wood duck boxes were located, monitored for evidence of nesting, and examined for any repairs that may be required. Information on the wood duck boxes has been collected for a number of years.

New Native Plant Nursery on Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm joined with Boy Scout Troop 327 of Mill Creek to develop an Eagle Scout Project for one of their members. The scout will design and install a native plant nursery on WDFW property within the Cherry Valley Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. Additional scouts and volunteers will collect native plant material; from salvage digs and cuttings to propagate 500 to 1,000 native plants. Once invasive weed such as blackberry are eradicated from a site, nursery plants will be planted to re-establish native plant communities.

Private Lands

Spring Bear Damage Hunts: Biologists Roozen continued with hunt preparations. Roozen continued drafting landowner agreements and contacting land managers and landowners, updated hunter access passes, data forms, and unit maps, and discussed hunt dynamics with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and WDFW staff. Planning and coordination for the Skagit and Monroe bear hunts will continue over the following weeks.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Areas

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Technician Curran Cosgrove began mowing old fields on Samish in preparation for weed control and potential expansion of agricultural enhancements. Site drainage is being monitored to identify drainage bottle necks.

Manager Belinda Rotton, Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis, District Biologist Danilson, and Officer Jeff Lee met with Skagit Citizen Advisory Group and Washington Waterfowl Association member to discuss in detail the proposal to develop a control hunter access program on the Samish Unit for weekend hunting during the waterfowl season. A variety of options were discussed. A number of other techniques to improve hunter distribution on the site will be implemented and evaluated before a regulatory approach will be used. Methods will include increased number of blinds, improved reader board information about site and quality hunt opportunities, additional crop rotations in new locations, and collecting site use data.

Manager Rotton and Natural Resource Specialist Meis met with contract farmer for the Samish Unit to discuss this seasons planting plan. Another meeting is scheduled for next week to discuss the potential corn sharecrop lease on the site with a local dairy farmer.

Headquarter Unit: Manager Rotton met with representative from the Department of Ecology to discuss the Joint Aquatic Resource Permits Application (JARPA) for the proposed pump station installation on Wylie Slough. Initial review indicates the project will have limited wetland impacts as currently designed.

DeBay's Slough Swan Reserve: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove rolled the remainder of the standing corn on the Hunt Unit to improve access for waterfowl and other wildlife. An increased number of birds were using the site with the decreased hunter disturbance.



Swans and ducks are utilizing the newly rolled corn on the DeBay Slough Hunt Unit.

Samish River - Welts Property Wetland Enhancement Project: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton met to discuss next steps to progress the project. They are working on more detailed plans for a parking area to include in the permit applications and are finalizing contract details.

Stillwater Revetment Removal Project: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm, Watershed Steward Hennick, and project proponents held a public meeting to present the proposed project to the public and to answer questions. Approximately 20 people attended the meeting. The most common questions were related to how the project is expected to affect properties upstream and downstream of the project area and how the project may affect recreation access. Comments can be submitted to Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov, and if received by March 15, will be reviewed and addressed by WDFW staff and partners. A second public meeting will be held on March 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sno-Valley Senior Center in Carnation.

Tennant Lake Boardwalk: Manager Kessler monitored the water level at Tennant Lake. He hiked in and adjusted the beaver dams and deceiver pipes. The lake water level is slowly dropping, but is still too high for the boardwalk to be opened to the public.

Intalco Unit Field Trial: Manager Kessler met onsite with members of the Washington Brittany Field Trial club to assess the Intalco Unit for a walking field trial in September. The unit may end up being too small for the type of trial they would like to hold.

Lake Terrell Fishing: Even with the wet cold weather we have been having, people are having good luck catching fish from the fishing pier at Lake Terrell. One fisherman has caught his limit of trout, including a few tri-ploids several times in the last two weeks.

GOAL 3: USE SOUND BUSINESS PRACTICES, DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wildlife Management

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) Grant Review: District Biologist Milner began reviewing ALEA grant proposals. This year, the review is conducted online and is taking more time per application than we expected. So far, there appears to be several excellent projects proposed for funding.

Osprey Nest Removal Permits: Biologist Milner worked with Puget Sound Energy Biologist Mel Walters on an osprey nest removal issue on Whidbey Island. We were able to resolve the issue and Walters took a trip along Highway 20 near Dugwulla Bay to assess whether the power lines in that vicinity need bird deflectors installed because waterfowl and swans use the area.

Assistance to U.S. Forest Service (USFS) regarding bat survey: Biologist Anderson consulted with USFS staff interested in efforts to locate a Townsend's maternity colony around a major roost they monitor. The major point of discussions was examination of outbuildings in the greater area and possible development of flyers to request public information on potential sites.

Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary: Biologist Anderson worked on organizational needs for Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary, as well as providing materials to non-profit collaborators who wish to promote the program and provide materials to the public. Anderson organized and provided outreach materials to Lands and Enforcement staff for outreach needs. Anderson sent

an update request to King County Conservation District to update their website. For Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary packets, WDFW charges \$5 per packet, check or money order, to cover printing and mailing. The bulk of Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary wildlife attraction and habitat enhancement material can be found at the WDFW Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/attracting/>

Hydropower projects and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing consultation: Biologist Anderson worked with Biologist Applegate regarding ongoing wildlife management and habitat mitigation needs for various hydropower projects proposed in King County. Applegate requested wildlife consultation regarding an ongoing project.

Private Lands/Access

Private Lands Payments: Biologist Roozen met with the last remaining landowners to authorize payment for their participation in the Snow Goose and Waterfowl Quality Hunt Programs.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Management

Brant Surveys: Biologist DeBruyn received training from ex-District Biologist Davison on the finer points of counting brant from the front seat of a 172 Cessna.

Skagit Climate Change Workshop: Restoration Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton, and staff from other programs participated in a workshop to learn about observed and anticipated effects of climate change in the Skagit watershed. One of the major goals of the workshop was to brainstorm how to incorporate climate change into future planning decisions.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle Management: Biologist Holman represented Region 5 at the annual meeting to discuss western pond turtle management in Washington. Holman presented a PowerPoint describing work conducted during 2012 in the Columbia River Gorge related to management of the State Endangered western pond turtle. The annual coordination meeting brings staff together from WDFW's Regions 5 and 6 as well as Headquarters. Representatives from the Woodland Park Zoo, and volunteers Kate and Frank Slavens were also in attendance. Summaries of work accomplished during 2012, plans for 2013, head starting, husbandry, disease management, population estimation, data management, etc. were all discussed.

Biologist Anderson conducted a site visit to the Beacon Rock western pond turtle habitat enhancement project being developed by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). This past week WSDOT staff moved several of the coil logs on a portion of Homestead Lake to allow for turtle movement from the Lake the upland habitats. Coil logs are used to minimize impacts from heavy equipment to wetlands during habitat enhancement work. No further work will take place at the site this spring and summer until after the turtle nesting season. In addition, there is a bald eagle nest immediately adjacent to the Lake that is active.



WSDOT staff moved several of the coil logs on a portion of Homestead Lake as part of the Beacon Rock western pond turtle habitat enhancement project this past week.

Injured Bald Eagle Recovery: Biologist Anderson assisted Enforcement Agent Kimball and Biologist Van Leuven with recovery of an injured bald eagle found along the Klickitat River. The bald eagle was an adult male and the veterinarian suspects lead poisoning or some other contamination. The eagle is still alive and has improved over the last 24 hours with treatment.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: A fawn mortality search associated with the Region 5 portion of the black-tailed deer research project was conducted. Study does and their associated young are being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and field (VHF) methods. The does are located in two study clusters concentrated within the Washougal (568) and Coweeman (550) GMUs. To date, in the Washougal cluster of five remaining does, four fawns remain alive.

Columbian White-tailed Deer (CWTD) Relocation: Biologists Stephens and Miller assisted USFWS staff this week with the necropsy of a CWTD doe that died after relocation to Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). No apparent trauma injuries observed and the deer had some indications of reasonable body condition. Samples of major organs, muscle, and rumen contents were collected which the USFWS will be submitting to Washington State University for analysis. Miller and Stephens also assisted in the capture of a doe/fawn pair that same afternoon and they were taken to Ridgefield NWR. The total number of deer moved is over 21, which is a great accomplishment.

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Elk Survey: Biologist Miller and Technician Sample conducted the monthly survey of elk on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. The duo observed 180 elk from the Weyerhaeuser viewpoint, including two collared elk associated with the Mount St. Helens elk study. Additional elk mortality was observed this week being fed upon by crows and an immature Golden eagle.

Pacific Flyway Wingbee: Biologist Bergh joined biologists from other state and federal agencies in the Pacific Flyway for the annual Wingbee in Redding, California. The Wingbee is part of the Cooperative Parts-Collection Survey that classifies waterfowl wings and tails to species, sex, and age. Participants processed approximately 24,000 hunter-harvested waterfowl wings and goose tails over five days. The color patterns and feather shapes were used to determine age and sex of the wings, with some species easier to identify than others. This was a great learning experience as many of the biologists had been participating for 20 plus years and had detailed knowledge to pass on to the newer participants.



Biologist Stephanie Bergh displays a wing from an adult drake Northern Shoveler at the Wingbee (left). Adult male American widgeon wing (right).

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) Grant Application Review: Biologist Stephens began reviewing applications for projects requesting ALEA grant funds. ALEA funds are available to individuals and organizations who utilize volunteers to carry out projects that benefit fish and wildlife or enhance public recreation opportunities in Washington.

Biologist Stephens will be working with Habitat Biologist West as well as members of the District Team to determine priorities for Region 5 and to score the applications. A total of 87 applications have been submitted for this grant cycle.

Wildlife Areas

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Installation of American Kestrel and Screech Owl Nest Boxes: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Technicians Doorly and Johnson installed nest boxes and perches in hopes of attracting American Kestrels, Screech Owls, and other birds of prey to control small rodents in the tree planting sites.

Three structures were installed in one North Unit site to establish nesting and perching in the area with the expectation that the birds would prey on small rodents, which can cause significant tree damage and mortality in the plantings. A short time after erecting the nest boxes, Kestrels were seen perched on them and diving off to capture prey.



Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Mount St. Helens Tree Plantings: Technician Sample planted 200 alder saplings along an erosion control structure in a dry river bed of the North Fork Toutle River and in areas recently cleared of Scotch broom in the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. Plans include planting 1,000 alder saplings or more in this area to promote native plant and grass emergence, and controlling the spread of Scotch broom in the area.

Technician Sample observed a group of elk foraging on an eroded river bank as she crested the hill carrying two buckets full of saplings and balancing a dibble across her shoulder. No new elk mortalities were seen and one adult bald eagle was seen near a previously found mortality.

Cedar Creek Pigeon Spring Maintenance: Technician Sample worked on clearing downed trees and overgrown vegetation from a mineral spring used by band-tailed pigeons on the Cedar Creek Wildlife Area. This is an ongoing project that may take several more days to remove brush piles from the spring.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Private Lands/Access

Access Site Upkeep: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes picked up and hauled 17 tires and two truckloads of drywall and trash from Vancouver Lake. Spangler and Rhodes also pressure washed algae and moss off the restroom and reader board at Barbers Access Site and dug a drainage ditch for water. Rhodes hand shoveled six to nine inches of mud and silt from the ADA fishing platform at Beginner's Hole.



Vancouver Lake upkeep (above) and the Beginner's Hole upkeep (below).





Access Staff Spangler and Rhodes pressure washed algae and moss off the restroom and reader board at Barbers Access Site.

Other

District 10 and Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Winter Conditions

Past Weather: February temperatures and precipitation were both below average for the month. Snowfall for the month was minimal with little to no accumulation on the valley floor on the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area.

Short-Term Forecast: The 6-10 day and the 8-14 day forecasts are for below normal temperatures and precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The one month forecast model shows below normal temperatures and an equal chance for above average, below average, or normal precipitation. The three month forecast model is for below normal temperatures and precipitation.

Habitat: Forage is available at lower elevations and elk appear to have fed heavily on willows and cottonwoods in the mudflow unit, while most areas above 2,500 feet currently have some snow cover, and areas above 3,000 feet have significant snow cover.

Snow Depths: See table for detailed information.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations of elk noted to date. On March 1, 2013, a total of 180 elk were present on the Mudflow Unit monitoring area.

Animal Condition: The vast majority of animals observed to date appear to be in good to fair condition. A few were observed with rough pelage on the mudflow this past week.

Mortality: Mortality was observed on the mudflow this week.

Public Contacts: None to report related to winter conditions.

The public is reminded that the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area lying east of a line defined by Hoffstadt Creek, The North Fork Toutle and Deer Creek is closed to public access through April 30 to minimize disturbance and associated energy demands on elk wintering there.

District 9 Winter Conditions

Past Weather: Mild winter conditions continue to dominate District 9. No new snow at lower elevations.

Winter Severity: The Klickitat Wildlife Area continues to be mostly free of snow and eastern Klickitat County is snow free and early green up has started. In the southern Cascades, snow levels retreated this week as mild weather continued.

Forecast: Mild conditions will continue.

Habitat: Habitat continues to be open below 2,000 feet throughout the region.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations have been reported for big game this past week.

Animal Condition: Deer and elk appear to be in very good condition and no winter stress/mortality has been reported this week. Animals appear to be healthy and several deer have been seen with last year's fawns.

Mortality: Mostly road kill, not attributed to winter conditions.

Public Contacts: None.

MOUNT SAINT HELENS ELK HERD
 2012/2013 WINTER CONDITIONS - SNO-PARK SNOW DEPTH,
 NRCS SNOTEL DATA, AND SNOWPACK

From web page <http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/giffordpinchot/recreation/wintersports/?recid=31178&actid=91>
http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/sno_narr3.pl
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/snotel/Washington/washington.html>

SNOWPARKS:		12/07/2012	12/14/2012	12/21/2012	12/28/2012	01/04/2013	01/11/2013	01/18/2013	01/25/2013	02/01/2013	02/08/2013	02/15/2013
Name	Elevation											
TRAIL OF TWO FORESTS	2,200'	No report	Trace of new snow	2ft of snow	More than 2ft of snow	No new report	No new report	No new report	No new report	10" new and 2 ft base	No new snow. 2ft total.	No new snow
MARBLE MT	2,700'	No new report	5" new snow	4ft of snow	More than 4ft of snow	No new report	No new report	No new report	No new snow. 72 inch base.	14" new and 80" base	No new snow. 84" base.	No new report
WAKEPISH	2,800'	No snow	5" new snow	42" of snow at the sno-park	More than 42" of snow	Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	No new report	Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	No new report	No new report

SNOWTEL STATIONS:

Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4	1/5-1/11	1/12-1/18	1/19-1/25	1/26-2/1	2/2-2/8	2/9-2/15
JUNE LAKE	3,340'	Avg Snow											
		Depth (inches)	12.3	26.8	68.8	103.3	101.6	97.3	93.3	88.4	103.1	98.2	98.4
		Min Temp (F)	30.9	27.5	25.7	27.5	18.7	23.7	17.2	28.6	29.3	26.2	24.6
		Max Temp (F)	43.9	37.8	35.2	34.5	35.1	40.3	47.1	63	39	49.6	42.4
		Avg Temp (F)	36.6	32.7	29.9	31.1	27	33	28.8	44.9	33.8	36.4	33.1
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	68	72	82.9	84.6	85.9	86.3	98.6	97.2	106.3	109.3	109.8
SPIRIT LAKE	3,520'	Avg Snow											
		Depth (inches)	1.1	9.6	19.1	27.8	26.1	19.7	20.1	18.1	25.9	24.7	25.3
		Min Temp (F)	31.5	19	19	22.3	20.3	25.3	9.9	27.7	28.6	12.7	23.2
		Max Temp (F)	48.4	41.9	44.4	35.6	41.7	46	54.4	54.3	42.1	48.2	43
		Avg Temp (F)	37.9	32.7	30.2	31.6	29.2	34.5	28.2	39.1	34.4	35.9	33.5

		Year to date precipitation (inches)	34.4	37.6	42.2	45.2	45.6	47.7	47.8	48.4	56.2	57.2	58.1
Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4	1/5-1/11	1/12-1/18	1/19-1/25	1/26-2/1	2/2-2/8	2/9-2/15
PEPPER CREEK	2,140'	Avg Snow											
		Depth (inches)	0	0.17	14.7	24	24.6	23.8	22.8	23	28.9	25.4	23.3
		Min Temp (F)	32.4	30.4	30	30.4	21.6	27	12.9	23.9	33.1	28.4	23.7
		Max Temp (F)	48	43.2	36.9	36.9	39	41.4	43.5	55.2	43.7	53.8	45.9
		Avg Temp (F)	40.2	35.4	33	33.8	28	33.3	26.5	33.4	35.4	36.2	35.5
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	22.2	23.7	29.9	31	31.3	33.8	33.8	34.3	37.3	38	38.2

Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4	1/5-1/11	1/12-1/18	1/19-1/25	1/26-2/1	2/2-2/8	2/9-2/15
SHEEP CANYON	3,990'	Avg Snow											
		Depth (inches)	12.6	25.7	61.3	96.3	93.6	88.4	84.7	81.4	102.7	102.5	103.4
		Min Temp (F)	29.1	21.9	23.4	25.5	20.5	23.7	14.5	25.5	28.2	24.1	23.9
		Max Temp (F)	42.6	36.5	33.8	33.6	39.9	39.4	54.4	58.5	37.8	52.5	39.2
		Avg Temp (F)	35	30.7	28.2	30.2	28.4	32.3	29.1	43.6	32.3	35.3	31.7
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	60.4	63.8	69.6	77.3	81.7	86.3	86.3	87	95.9	98.3	98.9

Name	Elevation	Stats	12/1-12/7	12/8-12/14	12/15-12/21	12/22-12/28	12/29-1/4	1/5-1/11	1/12-1/18	1/19-1/25	1/26-2/1	2/2-2/8	2/9-2/15
CALAMITY	2500'	Avg Snow											
		Depth (inches)	0	0	13	22	18.7	17.7	15.3	15	15.9	14.2	11.2
		Min Temp (F)	33.8	32.5	29.1	31.3	23.7	28	21.2	32.5	32.4	31.3	30
		Max Temp (F)	47.7	41.2	40.3	36.3	36.1	43.5	56.7	62.1	43.2	48	42.3
		Avg Temp (F)	40.2	35.6	32.8	33.4	29.1	36	32.2	47.2	36.3	39.2	35.8
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	42.1	44.5	52.2	54.6	54.8	59.2	59.4	60.1	66.4	67.5	68

Snowpack % of Avg Snow Water Equivalent	12/07/2012	12/14/2012	12/21/2012	12/28/2012	01/04/2013	01/11/2013	01/18/2013	01/25/2013	02/01/2013	02/08/2013	02/15/2013
JUNE LAKE	no data	no data	180%	134%	no data	no data	147%	139%	149%	no data	140%
SPIRIT LAKE	no data	200%	410%	134%	447%	371%	350%	286%	414%	535%	486%
SHEEP CANYON	86%	91%	151%	165%	170%	184%	169%	145%	164%	173%	160%

02/22/2013 03/01/2013

No new report	No new report
No new report	15" new snow and 90" base
Sno-park inaccessible due to heavy snow	No new report

2/16-2/22 2/23-3/1

96.1	122.4
25.7	27.1
51.4	41.5
33.3	32.4

111.5	119.1
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2/16-2/22 2/23-3/1

24.1	32
21.7	20.1
48.9	44.4
33.5	33

59.2 62.2

2/16-2/22 2/23-3/1

21.6 30.7
24.8 31.3
56.8 41.5
34.9 35.2

38.9 42.9

2/16-2/22 2/23-3/1

100.5 123
24.4 23.2
52.3 41.4
31.5 30.7

100.3 106.5

2/16-2/22 2/23-3/1

9.4 15.7
30.6 31.3
50.5 46
36.3 35.5

69.2 74

02/22/2013 03/01/2013

130% 140%
398% 371%

159% 153%

REGION 6

Wildlife Management

Oregon Spotted Frogs: Biologist Tirhi conducted the first state endangered Oregon spotted frog surveys for the 2013 field season in Thurston County. Frogs were once again found laying eggs (ovipositioning) at traditional sites on Fish Pond Creek and Salmon Creek on two private property sites. Frogs responded positively to habitat treatment on Salmon Creek. Non-native reed canary grass imported historically for livestock forage has invaded and remains a serious threat at most spotted frog wetlands throughout Washington. This invasive grass replaces the low emergent wetland vegetation that spotted frogs depend on to lay eggs. In an effort to restore that structure, WDFW biologists and others have been mowing canary grass in fall.

This project was conducted on Salmon Creek by a volunteer/consultant in 2012; two new oviposition sites were located in the treated area, both never previously used by spotted frogs. Elsewhere on the property, spotted frogs responded to habitat enhancements that included removal of relic black plastic/pots and creation of new breeding pools. In comparison, Fish Pond Creek numbers appear to be down due to lack of water at the one traditional breeding pool. Spotted frogs have high site fidelity and often lay eggs despite poor conditions at their traditional breeding sites (although eggs become compromised under those conditions). Tirhi met with the landowner at Fish Pond Creek to show her the oviposition site, discuss habitat issues, and open discussions about future site management.

Western Pond Turtle: Biologists Tirhi, Schmidt, Skriletz, and Holman along with staff from Headquarters and Woodland Park Zoo attended the annual meeting of the Western Pond Turtle Working Group. The intent of the annual meeting is to review previous years' activities at each of the three Washington recovery sites (Pierce, Mason and Klickitat counties), plan for the upcoming season (starts in April), review results of husbandry and head-starting turtles at both the Woodland Park and Oregon Zoo, and review turtle processing protocols and any new research. The 2013 meeting was well attended and included a review of a water testing procedure likely to begin at the Pierce County site and the results on an experiment in 2012 that brought half of the eggs into head-start immediately while half were left in the ground to incubate for 100 days. A looming issue and one that will take additional time in 2013 is the emerging shell rot (scud) first noticed at the Pierce County site in 2009 that is affecting turtles at both the Pierce and Klickitat sites. Staff is working closely with veterinarians at both zoos, as well as an expert in private practice.

Western Snowy Plovers: Biologists Hoenes, Sundstrom, and Michaelis in addition to Research Scientist Pearson and Sergeant Nixon attended the pre-season Western snowy plover coordination meeting with representatives from project cooperators. Cooperators include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, and Shoalwater Bay tribal biologists. All parties met to identify goals and objectives for the 2013 nesting season and sort out the logistics associated with reaching those goals and objectives. Key management objectives during the 2013 nesting season include initiating predator control efforts on USFWS lands at Leadbetter Point and reducing human disturbance to nesting plovers. The

second objective will be achieved by increasing Enforcement patrols during peak use weekends (e.g. clam digs and major holidays) and providing portable restrooms at Leadbetter during scheduled clam digs.

Master Hunter Damage Control Hunt #2726 Stats: Region 6 Master Hunters continue to assist with damage issues in the region. As of March 4, 2013, a total of 22 Master Hunters have been sent to 12 problem areas where they harvested 15 elk. Seven Master Hunters are still deployed, while four are on call. On call indicates they have been notified (in most cases) that their name has been given to a landowner, officer, or biologist and should expect to be contacted shortly. Availability and willingness is also verified at that time. Hunters who are on call from a landowner are considered deployed once they have made landowner contact. Thirteen Master Hunters are still available. Two Master Hunters have not responded to calls from an officer or to status checks. In each case two or more calls were placed. These hunters are marked as status unknown and will not be contacted again until they return calls.

One Master Hunter working with a landowner in the Humptulips area has spent more time fixing fences than hunting. Biologist Harris thanked him for setting a good example for the agency and the Master Hunter program.

Biologist Hoenes and Sergeant Chadwick met with the Ocean Spray Cranberry Growers Association in Long Beach. The growers are very concerned with the amount of damage the local elk herd is causing to their cranberry bogs and would like the Department to address the increasing number of elk damaging their bogs. Hoenes and Chadwick understood the grower's concerns and explained several management options available to help alleviate the problem.

Hunting and Fishing Access: Biologist Harris met with the local management team for a large industrial forest landowner. The area managed by this team represents 250,000 plus acres in five GMU's. Due to public abuse and criminal activities they intend to lock most of it down in the future. Harris was asked to attend this meeting because the local staff wishes to work with WDFW on a reasonable access plan for hunting and fishing, including WDFW's assistance with ongoing problems resulting from public access. The local management team is very interested in working with WDFW. They had many questions regarding what levels of access was desired and what WDFW can offer. Additionally, information about game species status on their lands and harvest information was requested. Biologist Harris will be working on proposals for access and road management over the next several weeks. Harris intends to seek advice from Enforcement and Fisheries staff as well as a local sportsman group that is actively working with WDFW in the largest block of land.

Wildlife Areas

Boy Scouts' Eagle Project: Biologist Tirhi oversaw a Boy Scouts' eagle project at a wildlife area in Pierce County. The wildlife area is managed as a recovery site for state endangered Western Pond Turtles. Approximately 25 scouts and adults spent a day removing blackberries, planting native shrubs, and building raised boardwalks around the three ponds and nesting hill on site. Blackberries and other non-native invasive are a constant battle at the wildlife area. Tirhi had scouts remove blackberry, roll weed cloth and plant natives in hopes of replacing the

invasive in one section. The scouts also installed two more raised walking platforms on the edges of the wetland that are used by staff to monitor the turtles throughout the nesting season since they continually flood. The boys and staff did an excellent job with one scout definitely earning his eagle award for his planning and organizational skills.



Approximately 25 scouts and adults spent a day removing blackberries, planting native shrubs, and building raised boardwalks to help enhance a wildlife area in Pierce County managed as a recovery site for state endangered Western Pond Turtles.

